

Neighborhood Grapevine

News from the City of Milwaukee's
Department of Neighborhood Services

Electrical Contractor fails to obtain hundreds of permits

by Robert Radmer, Electrical Section Supervisor

A simple mis-colored breaker switch spotted by an alert electrical inspector recently uncovered an alleged scam involving 100's of permits. With approximately 400 electrical contractors in the city of Milwaukee it's safe to assume that not all will be as reputable as they should be. James Jaskolski of Highland Electric took the term reputable to a new low by repeatedly charging his customers for the electrical affidavit or permit, but never submitting the application to the City of Milwaukee. In fact he took it as far as submitting to his customer a photocopy of the application and the check made out to the City of Milwaukee as proof that the proper application was on file.

Adding insult to injury Jaskolski was previously employed as an electrical inspector for the City of Milwaukee. He knew the system and what was expected of a contractor. Periodically Highland Electric would be caught and assessed a quad fee fine for working without a permit, but in no way did it make up for all the jobs that were done without a permit. The end result would be extra profit for Highland Electric and unrecognized work for which the owner could some day be liable.

This practice came to a halt when the customer he was allegedly cheating was Sears. It involved over 100 properties in the city of Milwaukee. Electrical inspector Jimmie McWaters spotted a different colored circuit-breaker switch in a recent service upgrade. That was a sign that more than the service upgrade was done. Indeed, the first contractor with proper permit upgraded the service, but the tell-tale evidence of different switches raised a red flag with inspector McWaters.

With Sears' cooperation, a computer report was generated using the mechanical contractor that was hired by Sears for the last 2 years. Then it was cross referenced with the electrical affi-



New home of DNS Administration, NIDC, Condemnation, Landlord Training and more.

DNS is Moving to the First Floor ZMB

Hopefully, by the time you read this the above picture will be bustling with activity. The first phase of the 1st floor remodeling project of the Zeidler Municipal Building (ZMB) is completed and the Health Department has moved into their area on the west side of the floor. The east side of the floor is the new home for DNS staff. The north area contains the IT, Fiscal, Public Information and Senior Management sections. The south side of the corridor will house DNS administration operations, Landlord Training, Condemnation, and Zoning Inspection, NIDC's TIN Program, and Housing Rehab Programs. As of this writing the move date for DNS staff to the 1st floor is September 25th for the north side and September 27th for the south side. Plans are being made to minimize the disruption of services to the public during the move.

Meanwhile, plans are progressing for the move at Mitchell Street. The DNS office at 9th and Mitchell will be closed by the end of this year. Meanwhile, the remaining Mitchell Street staff will be relocated in the vacated space on the 10th floor.

See No Permits page 2

See DNS move on page 6

No Permits from page 1

davits or permits. The report for missing applications was submitted to Sears, and in turn, Sears submitted the photocopies they had obtained by Highland. Since the discovery of this earlier this year, over 100 quad fee orders have been sent out to Highland Electric at \$220 each. Today 77 are still outstanding and turned over to Sears for correction by there new electrical contractor.

As a result of bad business practices, Highland Electric is no longer allowed electrical permits in the city of Milwaukee.

While the loss of revenue to taxpayers is significant, the greater risk is in the work that is done. Homeowners are the greatest losers on the deal. If no permit is discovered, the owner becomes liable which could include the cost of opening up sealed walls or any other concealed wiring work. In essence, the owner could have to pay twice for the work. Compounding the tragedy is that often people seek referrals from friends or relatives. When DNS uncovers a problem, these people are reluctant to admit a friend or relative did the work.

The affidavit system was built on mutual trust and relied on a contractor's honesty. The system saves time and money for both the City and the homeowner. Affidavits are spot checked and over the years have been very successful at providing a regulatory service at the lowest possible cost. The convenience of taking out the permit encourages more people to do so. It also is easier to take out the permit for relatively minor work.

However, the seriousness of the situation cannot be understated. If a contractor cut corners on a permit system, in what other areas did he take a short-cut? With electrical problems being one of the major sources for home fires, it is in the owner's best interest to check up on their contractor.

To avoid this situation the public can contact the Electrical section of DNS if they suspect anything wrong with a contractor. Call the Electrical section at 286-2532 to see if any irregularities have been reported. You can also call the DCD Development Center 286- 8211 to ask if a permit is on file. Also the DNS web site at (www.ci.mil.wi.us) has all the permits for all buildings in the city of Milwaukee. Also ask the contractor to see the permit. A fee paid and date mark should be stamped on the document.

It is ultimately up to the property owner to correct the problem, no matter the cost. The homeowner's only recourse after the violation has been discovered is through a civil suit which could be fruitless if the contractor is going broke. It is better to do your homework first so you can sleep better knowing everything is by the book. ☺

"Give me land 'lots' of land"

By Frank Ferraro

Lots...we got lots of City owned vacant lots. The Department of Neighborhood Services has the task of managing and maintaining some 3,300 vacant lots of all shapes and sizes, whose total land surface encompasses 455 acres.

Bill Karr and Frank Ferraro are the DNS foremen of this urban ranch who have battled together for the past 16 years, to ensure the grass is cut, signs are posted, snow, debris and vehicles, are removed, as well as having trees trimmed, seeding, and garden permits.

Bill and Frank ride herd over eight private contractors who have to bid to get to work on our urban ranch.

The City acquires these lots from urban renewal and tax foreclosure and also sells hundreds of lots each year.

So next time you see Bill or Frank don't say hi, say howdy. ☺

IT SECTION UPDATE

by Carolyn Wood

Converting NSS to Windows! We've been working on converting NSS from a DOS application to Windows. This improvement will retain the functionality of the existing keys that people are used to, and also provide us buttons that we can use in place of the function keys. It will be easier to navigate the screens with the mouse. Tom Cleary, Steve Fritsche, Dave Krey, Sue Sloniker and Carolyn Wood have been meeting to review and make suggestions about the changes. It has been long overdue, but it is nearly complete and we hope to have it installed on all computers by the end of the year.

Improved State Corporation File Search "Fantastic!" says Jim Styers, "very nice" according to Steve Fritsche, and Mike Greylak likes it. Why is Jim happier than a cat with two tails? It's the new and improved DNS state corporation file search. Because the DNS intranet has moved to a different server, we've been able to vastly expand the capabilities of the state corporation file search. Unlike the previous version there are no limits on searching. For example, if you have a burning desire to know just how many corporation names contain a space, you can find out in about three seconds. Do you want to know how many corporations have addresses in the same building? No Problem! Yes, this version is not only more user-friendly, it's much, much faster. ☺

For calender year 2000

Total new buildings construction
\$171,204,092

Total alterations \$122,170,925
Total Permits 31,279

New Dwelling Units 642

DNS TRIVIA: How many hotel/motels are there in the city of Milwaukee?

Extra Credit: How many gas stations are there?

up your car.

ANSWER: At the last count 9/1/01 there are 54 Hotel and Motel licenses and 218 places to gas

City back in "Bees Nest" business

The DNS section of Nuisance and Environmental Health used to handle complaints about bee and hornet nests. A contractor was paid to retrieve the nests for venom extraction. The contractor lost that contract and the City for a while stopped acting on the issue.

Recently, the DPW Forestry Department took on the job with no added funding at this time. Complaints about nests in City owned trees can be called in to DPW at 286-8282. A forestry worker will spray the nest at night when activity is low and most of the hive is occupied. After a few days when activity has subsided, the nest will be removed.

Nests on private property are the responsibility of the owner. Such requests should be referred to the yellow pages under pest removal. ☺

Anti-Graffiti Campaign Kicks off 2001

by Sharon Blando, Anti-graffiti Program Coordinator

"Do Art Not Graffiti," "Graffiti is Ugly," "Keep our city clean and I mean it!" and "Graffiti Stinks" are a few of the messages the MPS youth had on the posters they made for the Anti-Graffiti Spring Kick Off. The posters were on display in the City Hall rotunda from May 7-11, 2001. The students, Mayor Norquist, Alderwoman Breier, and members from the Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee joined our department in bringing out the message: "Make your mark on the world, not on a wall."

Many taggers have moved from spray painting items to attaching labels and stickers. The labels may say, "hi my name is XYZ" or may be a slogan. The labels are then attached to stop signs, street light poles, and mail boxes as the tagger strolls by and palms off the label to the item. The number of calls to the graffiti hotline has remained the same for the past few years, but now many of the calls are for these "furniture pieces." Furniture pieces also include such items as: fire hydrants, utility boxes, newspaper boxes, and parking meters.

Removing labels from furniture pieces is simple if you use an adhesive remover. Adhesive removers are found at most hardware stores and even some drug stores. Many volunteers who remove graffiti find the adhesive remover also works well in cleaning up after their children and grandchildren. They use it on tracked in grease, removing price tags from picture frames, and removing scotch tape left from their child's creative projects.

Please continue to e-mail or phone the hotline with any sightings of graffiti vandalism at 286-8715 and graffiti@ci.mil.wi.us. As one student so adequately stated: "Just let our city be clean." ☺

Failure to Control Graffiti Comes with a heavy Price

from National Institute of Business Management

Take workplace graffiti seriously—the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) does. Foster Wheeler Construction Inc. recently agreed to pay a \$1.32 million settlement for racial and sexual harassment claims that included graffiti left on the walls of portable toilets at a site in Robbins, Ill. An EEOC attorney said the case challenged a persistent problem of harassing graffiti in the construction industry. ☺



ABOVE: Some of this year's anti-graffiti posters.
Below: What some op-ed opinions think about graffiti.



OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP HOMEOWNERS FIX UP THEIR HOMES:

Although the TID Forgivable Loan Program is limited to a few neighborhoods at a time, it is only one resource available to help property owners finance improvements. Property owners throughout the Lindsay Heights TID may be eligible for other financial programs including:

Home Repair Loans may be available from Neighborhood Improvement Development Corp (NIDC) and/or the Department of City Development: 286-5608. Terms and interest rates vary, dependent upon home owners' ability to pay. Home Repair Programs are funded each year, and sometimes run out of funds by Fall; but interested homeowners may have their names put on the mailing list to receive information as soon as new funding is available.

Rental Rehab forgivable loans may be available to owners of rental properties from Neighborhood Improvement Development Corp (NIDC) and/or Department of City Development: 286-5690. Loans, available for up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, cannot exceed \$10,000 per unit and must be matched by the owner. Rental Rehab Programs are funded each year, and sometimes run out of funds by fall; but interested landlords may have their names put on the mailing list to receive information as soon as new funding is available.

Paint and Fix-up Grants for small exterior repair jobs and/or painting may be available from the YMCA Community Development Corp. Grants of \$500 are issued on a first-come-first-served basis to property owners in NSP Area #10 (I-43 to 20th Street, Walnut to Locust). Contact Tony Block at the YMCA CDC, 374-3000, extension 114.

Home Security Program grants of up to \$1200 may be available from the YMCA CDC for exterior lighting, security doors and/or windows, alarm systems or other security measures. Contact Natasha King at the YMCA CDC, 374-3000, extension 110.

WHEDA Home Improvement Loans: Second Mortgage loans of \$1,000 to \$15,000 are available for terms up to 15 years to make either interior or exterior repairs or improvements. Borrower must have reasonably good credit over the past 12 months and a source of income sufficient to repay the loan within 15 years. No equity or appraisal needed.

Lenders who originate WHEDA Home Improvement Loans are:

Equitable Bank	Vickie Natarelli	3418 W National Av	645-3553
Great Midwest	Anthony Hurley	734 W Jackson	276-1180
Pyramax Bank	Ivan Gordon	1605 W Mitchell	645-5962
TCF Bank	Scott Wunderlich	2100 W Good Hope	351-8683
Tri City Bank	Mary Scott	7213 N Teutonia Av	351-7280

WHEDA Major Rehab HOME Loans: Mortgage loans available to existing homeowners to refinance an existing mortgage and do major rehabilitation of their home or to people who want to buy, rehab and live in a home at least 20 years old. Major rehabilitation is defined as improvements costing at least one-third the original purchase price of the house (example: rehab costs of at least \$18,334 required on a house purchased for \$55,000). Contact Connie Pukaite at WHEDA (227-4348) for information about Major Rehab Loans.☺

Neighborhood Surveys and DNS

by Al Garcia

Nearly 10 years ago, the Milwaukee Block Grant office began funding a staff position at four non-profit organizations whose key focus was to promote and organize resident driven "windshield" surveys as a means to assess the housing. Critical to the success of this initiative is how one handles resident volunteers surveying their neighbors' properties. If not orchestrated properly, neighbors inspecting their neighbors' properties is potentially a very prickly situation.

Thus, the "windshield" approach, meaning we promote people staying in cars and identifying obvious repair needs from the safety of the vehicle. It is not necessary to be a housing expert to identify peeling paint, a faulty porch or a broken window. Distressed properties are not difficult to identify and folks walking around someone's house and taking notes will likely not be well received. Confrontations will quickly erode the volunteer base.

Once resident volunteers conduct their Spring surveys, "friendly" letters are sent by the community group indicating that concerned residents in the area have identified the property as needing repairs. Because it is a "friendly" approach, the letters also identify possible resources to help owners with the repairs. Some letters also support the notion that the informal surveys are meant to protect everyone's investment.

No threat of DNS inspector involvement is made with initial letters. Resident volunteers and/or funded staff persons research ownership information on the City's WEB site to verify accurate property and ownership information for the mailings. DNS pays postage for mailing of the letters, which include a one page inspection sheet identifying some of the repairs needed and the name of a contact person at the community group for further information.

In the fall, when the exterior repair season is nearing its end around here, the volunteers re-survey the properties sent letters to determine what, if anything, has been done. Because the process has traditionally garnered a 50% compliance rate based on the letters, it is clear that limited municipal resources are leveraged by the resident driven process. What's more, the commonality of housing issues is key to all so it's an endeavor that everyone can support and is a wonderful organizing tool that can lead to other neighborhood initiatives.

The Code Enforcement Manager or designated rep and Inspectors involved with DNS code enforcement meet with the resident/non-profit group monthly, known as the Citywide Housing Coalition. The group involves itself with other related issues, such as predatory lending and promoting stronger local code requirements for vacant, boarded properties.

Reticent property owners (community groups can mail out more than one letter to owners who ignore initial letters if they so choose) are turned over to the Code Enforcement section for formal, DNS inspections to identify actual violations. This process mandates repairs within reasonable time frames. Owners can be fined for failing to make the repairs.

Even if formally written up for violations, residents are informed that there may be available resources. A staff person with the Code Enforcement section is available to identify resources to residents. Inspectors routinely also provide resource information to clients in hopes of effecting compliance.

See SURVEY page 7

Staff Changes At DNS

John Cullaton has been with the City for 25 years. He started with the Health Department, Training and Special Services Division; working in the rabies control and lead poisoning sections before transferring to the pest control division. Under a Health Department reorganization, divisions were combined forming the new "Vector Control" division and assigned the responsibilities of rabies control, animal control, nuisance vehicles and pest control. He continued working in that division until recently when, under the creation of DNS, the opportunity to work in code enforcement arose.

Brad Gollman says he's "the new guy from the outside." With over 25 years experience in appraising, Brad brings a slightly different perspective to DNS. He attended UWM and began his appraising career in Milwaukee. Having worked in the public and private sector (in two different states), he finds it interesting to be an inspector in his home town.

Karen Boswell has been with the City for 31/2 years. Her first three years were spent with Vector and Nuisance Control. She enjoyed her time there and so far, so good in the new division. She is married to Karlton who is a Milwaukee police officer and they have one child and one on the way. Her son Jordan is six and keeps her pretty busy. The "one on the way" is due on November 1st (hopefully sooner!) In her spare time, she likes to garden and spend time with her family and their three year old Rottweiler, Hannah.

Victor Drake is a new DNS Code Enforcement Inspector. He started as a temp for Vector. Before starting work for the City, he worked in construction/fire restoration as a project manager and fire restoration specialist. He has an associate's degree in accounting. He enjoys most sports events. He is married with four children.

Anthony Goodman is a recent transfer from Vector Control in June. Married with three children, sons Anthony, Jr. and Quentin, and daughter Briana. Hobbies are soccer, dominoes, and a good book.

Pete Sadowski was hired as a graduate intern whose efforts will be focused on improving tenant/landlord/resident relations within the Eastside/UWM community. He recently graduated in spring 2001, receiving BS degree in architecture with a minor in urban planning and will be attending graduate school in the fall to pursue a master's degree. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his fiancée, Christine, fishing and working on his golf game.



New DNS Inspectors: (L to R) Victor Drake, Anthony Goodman, Karen Boswell, Brad Gollman, and Student Intern Peter Sadowski.

On April 16th **Todd Vandre** accepted a promotion to the position of Special Enforcement Inspector. Todd will be filling the vacancy left by **Larry Govin-Matzat** when Larry transferred to the Zoning section last year.

Jennifer Scholz has been hired as a Code Enforcement Inspector in the Residential Section. She has worked for the City a little over three years. Previously she worked for Vector Nuisance Division. She has recently passed her state certification exams for UDC-Construction, HVAC and Commercial Building Code as well as State Fire Inspector.

Marcetta Otto temped for the City for nearly 2 years, working in Health Department for one year and then nine months in the Muni-Court system. She took the clerical test and landed the job at Mitchell Street. She is a graduate of Winona State in Minnesota. She has a BS in School and Community Health with a minor in Public Administration. She is married, and has two cats, one named "Little Dog" and "Kit" like Kit-kat the candy bar. Other four-legged family includes two ferrets, Ringo and Tamon. Welcome aboard to all the new DNS folks! ☺



New clerical as Mitchell St
Marcetta Otto

DNS Moving from page 1

Work is also continuing on remodeling the Robert Anderson Building— the eventual home for for the Residential, Environmental, and Nuisance staffs. It is anticipated that the Residential staff will be moving into the 1st floor of the Anderson Building in July 2002. The Nuisance staff will remain at their present Fond du Lac location until the space on the 2nd floor is completed.

After the work is completed on the Anderson Building, the 10th floor "Mitchell staff" will move there. The vacated space on the tenth floor will be remodeled as the remaining DNS Trades sections of Electrical, Plumbing and Construction will swap sides during the construction. The remaining newly remodeled half of the tenth floor will go to DPW. The folks on the 11th floor, Commercial Inspection will remain in place.

If all this sounds complicated...it is. But in the end we all are going to have a place to do our jobs and a better way to meet and greet the public. We will have many new features in our new facility, and the increase in consolidation will bridge the gap since the Mitchell split in January of 1990.

In other administration news, the VOI is now on the Human Resource site of the City Mint page (Milwaukee Intranet). People can view this document by clicking on the site. City departments are selected for viewing from a listed index.

As a continued reminder, our Intranet Home page now is connected to the Map Milwaukee function of ITMD. This allows us access to mapping functions that can assist us in performing our job duties. Minutes of other Departmental staff meetings are contained within this web page. ☺

DNS First Annual Picnic

by Tracy Williams

DNS held its first annual Baseball picnic on Saturday, August 25. IT DIDN'T RAIN!!! Planning and coordination of this picnic began in spring of this year. The last Saturday of August seemed like a good date because most people would be back from scheduled vacations. But you can't control the weather. Two committees were formed to coordinate this event. The baseball committee which formed the teams and decided the rules; and the picnic committee which coordinated the games for kids, the food, the cooks, the prizes, the supplies, the tent, etc. The Unions were kind and generous and provided funds to pay for the soda, ice and condiments. The upper management paid for the meat and buns. Pandora Bender coordinated the logo'd baseball hat fund-raising project. These hats were then offered to DNS employees for a small profit to be used for the picnic. This helped cover the cost of the park permits, piñatas, clowns and prizes. The place was Lincoln Park, which is a beautiful park on the city's north side. Now that everything was ready, we just prayed for good weather.

Friday night, the 24th, the weather report for the following day was dismal. "Scattered storms forecasted for the entire day from central Illinois to Green Bay. Rain likely. Heavy at times." It was suppose to be WET all day! The morning of the picnic, the group met at the park at 9 AM. The sky was overcast and appeared dark to the west. The group contemplated calling off or cancelling the picnic but we had everything ready to go. We then decided to just have it and see how it goes. Clyde Hutchinson was so kind and offered his 20' x 30' tent for the day. We set up the food under the tent, put the grills under the trees and hoped that the rain would hold off. The sun actually broke through the clouds while the tent was going up which was a good omen.

At 11 AM, people starting showing up and the first baseball games were beginning. Admin/NIDC played against Nuisance Control. Unfortunately, not all of the team members were there (probably due to the weather) so they compromised and were able to have enough players using spouses, friends and kids. The Trades played against Code Enforcement at the other field. The Trades were a bit short on their members (either the weather or golf affected their numbers) so two people from Code Enforcement volunteered to play with them. Nuisance Control beat Admin/NIDC and Code Enforcement beat the Trades in the first round. AND THE RAIN HELD OFF!

After the first game, everyone gathered back at the picnic grounds and the food was ready to eat. Most participants provided a dish to pass. There were a variety of pasta salads, bean dishes, fruit salads, desserts, chips, dips, and watermelon. The cooks were busy grilling hamburgers, hotdogs, bratwurst and Italian sausages.

During this time, kids were getting their faces painted and attacking the piñatas while two clowns (only two?) toured the picnic area. Still no rain, but it was threatening. Besides the piñatas, several games were planned for the kids, but, with the rain looming, the final baseball game was pushed ahead of schedule.

Because of the shortage of players for each section, only one final game was to be played – Nuisance Control/NIDC/Admin against Code Enforcement. The game was exciting and intense. We played the whole 7 innings. All during the game, the wind picked up, the black clouds were swirling and raindrops fell here and there but IT STILL DIDN'T RAIN. Code Enforcement Beat Nuisance Control/NIDC/Admin, 7 to 5! After the game, awards were given to each team. Roger Parazinski was chosen as the most valuable player. Everyone helped in cleaning up and putting things away. The picnic ended between 5 and 6 PM. At 6:15, the skies opened up and it rained hard, very hard. Whew, we made it!

Everyone had a great time. More than 200 people attended. It was such a success that we are planning on having another baseball picnic next year on Saturday, August 24th. Time and place to be determined. Please mark your calendars and we'll see you there.

I would also like to thank all of the members of the committees and those who helped on the day of the event – Pandora Bender, Barb Bogdanski, Doreen Baker (Todd Vanfre's fiancé), Tim Bolger, Henry Carter, Roger Cortez, Al Garcia, Mike Hammerman, Karen Jacobs, Christella Juarez, Dave Krey, Gerald Michalek, Tom Mishefske, Joe Payne, Karen Reasby, Ron Roberts, Jenny Scholz, Arnoldo Sevilla, Todd Vandre, San Juanita Velez and Mike Veith. Thanks for all of your help in making this picnic a great success. ☺



It was a mad dash for candy as one of the pinatas broke open for all the DNS children.

Survey from page 5

The CWHC has gathered clout since its inception. Last year, some 30+ landlords who received second letters after ignoring initial entreaties showed up at a meeting of the CWHC to respond to the group as to why repairs had yet to be made. Most landlords were cooperative.

The above process is repeated annually. I hope the preceding was helpful to you. If you have questions, feel free to respond via e-mail. (agarci@ci.mil.wi.us) You can also contact Mr. Curzon at SPCA, (414) 444-9803. They have used the survey for a number of years. ☺

DNS How to reach us

286-2268 1673 S. 9th St, 3rd floor
286-3441 841 N. Broadway 1st floor
286-5618 Neighborhood Improvement Development Corp.



Have a contribution for the January edition of the
DNS GRAPEVINE? Deadline December 15, 2001
Email it to Todd Weiler, Editor: tweiler@ci.mil.wi.us

Directed Special Pick-ups Program nets over a million pounds of garbage

by Todd Weiler

One of the key tools used this summer to help clean up neighborhoods was the Directed Special Pickup. Neighborhood groups select special areas for intensive City cleanup services. Each of the 17 aldermanic districts had the option of selecting a 30 block area to remove large garbage items, junk cars and items typically not collected in the regular garbage cart system. The new system is a cooperative arrangement between neighborhoods, Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS).

The way it works is selected neighborhood groups go door to door with a flyer notifying residents about potential litter problems and how to move the garbage out. Residents simply place the items next to their regular garbage collection point on a Friday and DPW will come through on the next Monday to remove it all. Any remaining garbage nuisances are followed up with orders and enforcement action from the Department of Neighborhood Services. The program has proved to be a speedy and efficient way to help neighborhoods stay clean. The contact by the community groups has benefited the City with a higher compliance rate than traditional enforcement efforts. Neighborhood groups are excited about the program since it helps to assert neighborhood standards for cleanliness and maintenance.

The Department of Public Works utilizes a special skid loader to grapple large items which in the past could result in back injuries to workers. To date the City has removed 762 tons of garbage from 15 Special Pickups. DPW also made 1115 stops for brush and 2053 for furniture or heavy items. 662 alleys were swept gathering 362 cubic yards of waste. Among the items collected are 1275 tires. DNS has issued 109 follow-up cleanup orders and 120 nuisance vehicle orders for the remaining problems. The new program has proven to be a win-win for all involved. ☺

United Way Fund Drive off to a Creamy Start

by Todd Weiler

One way to get to people's hearts is through their stomachs. Such was the case this year thanks in part to the State Fair Park's cream puff offering. With an order of 6 or more dozen, drivers from Bell Ambulance Company provided free delivery of the treats in their air-conditioned ambulances. The cost was \$2.50 per puff. DNS sweetened the offer by rounding the price to \$3 or 50 cents profit per cream puff. 80 cream-puffs later the DNS United Way fund was \$40 richer. Success never tasted sooo good!

DNS will continue rolling the dough to make more dough. The DNS annual United Way bake sale is again being hosted this year, on October 25, 2001 on LP Municipal Building, from 7 AM - 12 PM. Bring your loose change and indulge yourself for a good cause. Think of your co-workers who would like a treat if your diet is still holding you back. Your thoughtfulness and generosity will go a long way towards helping others. Thanks! ☺

Commissioner's Corner

How Does Code Enforcement Add Value to the City?

by DNS Commissioner Martin G. Collins



What is the value of code enforcement to the city? Quantifying the value of our inspection program has always been difficult. How do you place a value on the perception of a well-maintained neighborhood over one filled with junk cars, litter, and buildings in need of paint and repairs? We could look at the issue of assessed value, but that reflects sales prices and those are highly impacted by a neighborhood's perception as a safe or unsafe place.

One way to do it is to assign a cost of compliance to each violation type and use the computer to calculate the cost of compliance for all abated violations. Said another way, how much value was reinvested in the city as a result of complying with code enforcement orders?

A small project team worked on trying to figure that out. Carolyn Wood did the computer work and Tom Mishefske and his rehab specialists calculated a high and low range of costs of making repairs to the top 100 most frequently cited code violations by residential code enforcement inspectors. I instructed them to calculate the value in a conservative manner so that no one could criticize the numbers as being puffed up.

The value added to Milwaukee by Residential Code Enforcement Inspectors is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Low Estimate</u>	<u>High Estimate</u>
1997	\$26,709,703	\$12,497,855	\$40,921,551
1998	23,904,197	11,339,883	36,468,511
1999	21,869,851	8,539,103	35,200,599

Why is this a conservative estimate? It only covers the top one hundred violations and not the over one hundred other violations. It does not include the cost of complying with violations where inspectors have written custom text and this occurred 6,821 times in 1999. It does not include the work of the Code Compliance Inspectors, Commercial Code Enforcement Inspectors, Trades inspectors or Environmental and Nuisance Control Inspectors.

The investment made by the City in its code enforcement program yields a return many times over. The repairs made as a result of the orders these inspectors issued have a non-economic impact as well. Many of you have heard of the "broken window" theory of crime where disorder breeds criminal activity. These are some of the inspectors whose work results in broken windows getting fixed. An active code enforcement program carried out in coordination with the efforts of other city agency programs results in an effective tool for maintaining Milwaukee's neighborhoods as good places to live. ☺